

Township of Gillies Creating a Barrier Free Community Municipal Accessibility Plan 2009

Introduction:

People with disabilities represent a significant and growing part of our population. According to Statistics Canada, about 1.9 million Ontarians have disabilities – about 16% of the population. It is estimated that 20% of the population will have disabilities in two decades. The purpose of the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) is to improve opportunities for people with disabilities and to provide for their involvement in the identification, removal and prevention of barriers to their full participation in the life of the province. The ODA mandates that all municipalities prepare annual accessibility plans.

The Township of Gillies is committed to promoting a barrier-free municipality for employees, citizens and all who live, work, visit and invest in the municipality.

This report describes the measures that the Township of Gillies has taken and will take to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Municipal Highlights:

Gillies Township is a rural municipality located approximately 30 kilometres southwest of the City of Thunder Bay. It consists of two small settlement areas – South Gillies and Hymers – and is primarily comprised of agricultural and forested areas. There are a few small commercial businesses and many home based businesses. It has one public school under the jurisdiction of the Lakehead Board of Education. According to the 2006 Census, the population of the Township is 544.

Services provided to the residents directly by the municipality include:

- road maintenance;
- fire and first response protection;
- solid waste disposal and blue box depot;
- cemetery administration;
- by-law enforcement;
- building permits and inspections; and
- administrative services including council representation and property tax collection.

Public infrastructure in the municipality includes:

- a municipal garage;
- a municipal fire hall;
- a waste disposal site; and
- Municipal office space leased from the community school.

Services provided by other organizations and agencies include:

- social services provided by the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board;
- policing services provided by the Ontario Provincial Police;
- administration of *Provincial Offences Act*, including court administration, court support functions and municipal by-law prosecution and fine collection provided by the Provincial Offences Office are administered by the City of Thunder Bay;
- library services provided by the OliverPaipoonge Library; and
- recreational services provided by a privately owned Community Centre governed by a private Board of Directors.

Target Groups:

The target groups in this Municipal Accessibility Plan are the concerned general public, persons with mobility impairment, seniors, persons with physical disabilities, persons who are deaf and blind and supportive stakeholders.

Annual Accessibility Plans:

Once the initial plan has been created, plans in the following years will focus on the targets achieved and work completed with an update of plans for the next year.

Once existing barriers have been eliminated and preventative measures such as accessibility standards and guidelines have been implemented, the annual accessibility plans will address the ongoing suitability of the guidelines, how they are used and identify exceptional impacts on these plans.

Operational Review and Methodologies:

An annual review will be set for every twelve months. Rationales and methodologies for the review include:

- conducting visual inspections and gather information on barriers that would affect everyday activities for those individuals that have disabilities;
- working towards eliminating those barriers over time;
- having high regard to barriers when constructing new facilities and making renovations to existing facilities;
- in addition to physical modifications, regard must be had to programs, processes and policies that are reviewed and/or created;
- all new programs and services offered shall be reviewed with consideration given to accessibility and that the programs are as inclusive as possible;
- use the Government of Ontario barrier-free design guidelines that promote accessibility for people with disabilities to buildings that the Township buys, leases, builds or significantly renovates. The barrier-free design guidelines used will ensure the level of accessibility for government buildings is at least as good as or better than the level of accessibility required by the *Building Code Act, 1992*;

- accommodate the employment-related accessibility needs of people with disabilities who apply for jobs with the municipal government, as required by the *Human Rights Code*;
- seek public input through the publication of the Municipal Accessibility Plan through the gathering of comments and suggestions from the target groups (Appendix A);
- ensure that managers and supervisors have access to the information necessary to meet the government's duties to employees with disabilities.

Communication of the Annual Accessibility Plan:

Copies of the Municipal Accessibility Plan for the Corporation of the Township of Gillies are available at the Municipal Office, 1092 Highway 595, Kakabeka Falls ON, as well as posted on the Township's website at www.gilliestownship.ca. The Plan will be made available in alternate formats upon request.

Since the Township of Gillies receives services from outside organizations and agencies, the following Accessibility Plans form a part of the Municipal Accessibility Plan:

The Annual Accessibility Plan for the Lakehead District School Board is available at www.lakeheadschoools.ca

The Annual Accessibility Plan for the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board is available at www.thunderbay.ca.

The Annual Accessibility Plan for the OliverPaipoonge Library is available at <http://oliverpaipoonge.sencia.ca>.

Key Contact:

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Appendix A

PAST INITIATIVES TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

2004

- wheel chair access to the Gillies Municipal Recreation Building;
- ample parking near wheelchair access ramp;
- employees respond to telephone inquiries;
- e-mail service made available;
- voting site has wheelchair access;
- PD Park has a level area allowing access to those with mobility disabilities;
- upon request information contained in written material distributed to the public is provided verbally;
- telephone service is available to those with visual impairments;
- reviewed by-laws from 2000-2001 to identify barriers to persons with disabilities

2005

- reviewed by-laws from 1998-1999 to identify barriers to persons with disabilities;
- reviewed by-laws from 1996-1997 to identify barriers to persons with disabilities;
- signs for wheelchair access have been installed and the area in front of the wheelchair access is kept plowed in the winter;
- the Gillies Community Centre constructed a wheelchair access and an wheelchair accessible washroom;
- township website www.gilliestownship.ca is now available to allow those with hearing impairments to access municipal information;
- waste disposal site attendants to assist those that need help

2006

- reviewed remaining by-laws to identify barriers to persons with disabilities;

2007

- examined the new municipal office located at the school for accessibility and made arrangements with the school to allow access to the Municipal Office via the school's main entrance;
- examined municipal services for barriers.

2008

- ensured that outside organizations and agencies that provide services to the Township of Gillies have updated Accessibility Plans;
- all existing by-laws and polices have been reviewed to identify barriers; and
- it has been determined that all barriers within the community have been identified and remedied.

Appendix B

CONTINUING IMPLEMENTATION OF PLAN

2009

All barriers have now been identified and removed. The annual review of the shall continue to be implemented with the following focus:

1. To continue to educate employees on accessibility awareness and provide opportunities for staff to continue to be engaged in eliminating barriers.
2. To implement the impending requirements of Bill 118, *Accessibility For Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005*, including Ontario Regulation 429/07 - *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* by January 1, 2010.
3. Train emergency fire and first response teams on emergency preparedness and providing aid for people with disabilities and special needs.
4. To continue to ensure that the community remains barrier free with all future by-laws, practices and policies.

Appendix C

**Township of Gillies
Municipal Accessibility Plan
Request for Comments/Suggestions**

As part of the Township’s ongoing responsibility under the Municipal Accessibility Plan, the Township is required to consult with the target groups on accessibility issues. If you have any comments or suggestions for the Township on accessibility issues please comment in the following area and submit to the Township via email, fax or regular mail.

Customer Service	Yes	No
Our customer service policy makes sure that customers with disabilities receive the same service as all our other customers.		
Our employees are comfortable serving customers with disabilities.		
We can provide our services in different ways – we ask customers how we may help them.		
Access to our premises for customers and employees	Yes	No
Our premises have automatic doors and level access to the entrance.		
Our parking lot has spaces reserved for people with disabilities.		
Hallways and aisles are clutter-free and washrooms are accessible.		
Communication	Yes	No
Our signs are easy-to-read in large type.		
Our website is designed to be user friendly and accessible to customers with disabilities.		
We have a TTY (a telecommunication device people who are deaf or hard of hearing) number.		
Our reports, advertisements and other written materials use respectful language.		
Employment		
Our staff is comfortable serving customers with disabilities.		
Our services can be provided in different ways. We ask customers how we may help them.		
When we use an e-recruitment website, we ask if it’s accessible to people with disabilities or if it features alternative advertising methods.		
We’re prepared to interview a job applicant who may need accommodation.		
Our job training can be delivered in alternate formats.		
Our working conditions are flexible and we can accommodate workers with different needs.		

Appendix D

DISABILITY: THE ODA DEFINITION

The ODA draws on the broad definition for disability that appears in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. "Disability" is:

- a. any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- b. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- c. a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. a mental disorder, or
- e. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Appendix E

TYPES OF BARRIERS

Barrier type	Example
Physical	A door knob that cannot be operated by a elderly person with limited upper-body mobility and strength
Architectural	A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter
Informational	Typefaces that are too small to be read by a person with low vision
Communicational	A professor who talks loudly when addressing a deaf student
Attitudinal	A recreational swimming program which discourages people with developmental disabilities from participating.
Technological	Information on a municipal website, which cannot be, accessed by a person who is blind who has reading software for a computer.
Policy/Practice	A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly